

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A system, comprising:  
a production database; and  
5 a refresh mechanism configured to:  
generate a storage checkpoint of a production database;  
generate a database clone from the storage checkpoint;  
load data to the database clone, wherein the production database is  
available for access by users during said load; and  
10 switch the storage checkpoint to be the entry point to the production  
database.
2. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the refresh mechanism is further  
configured to perform post-processing on the database clone prior to said switch.  
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3. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the refresh mechanism is further  
configured to:  
stop the production database prior to said switch; and  
start the production database after said switch.  
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4. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the production database is a data  
warehouse.
5. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the generated database clone  
25 includes references to data in the production database.
6. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the refresh mechanism is  
configured to perform said load data to the database clone on a different host machine  
than a host machine hosting the production database.  
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7. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the refresh mechanism is configured to perform said load data to the database clone on a host machine hosting the production database.

5 8. A system, comprising:  
means for generating a database clone of a production database;  
means for loading data to the database clone, wherein the production database is  
available for access by users during said loading; and  
means for switching the storage checkpoint to be the entry point to the production  
10 database.

9. A method for refreshing a production database, comprising:  
generating a storage checkpoint of the production database;  
generating a database clone from the storage checkpoint;  
15 loading data to the database clone, wherein the production database is available  
for access by users during said loading; and  
switching the storage checkpoint to be the entry point to the production database.

10. The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising performing post-  
20 processing on the database clone prior to said switching.

11. The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising:  
stopping the production database prior to said switching; and  
starting the production database after said switching.

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12. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the production database is a  
data warehouse.

13. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the generated database clone  
30 includes references to data in the production database.

14. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein said loading data to the database clone is performed on a different host machine than a host machine hosting the production database.

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15. A computer-accessible medium comprising program instructions, wherein the program instructions are configured to implement:

generating a storage checkpoint of a production database;

generating a database clone from the storage checkpoint;

10 loading data to the database clone, wherein the production database is available for access by users during said loading; and

switching the storage checkpoint to be the entry point to the production database.

16. The computer-accessible medium as recited in claim 15, wherein the  
15 program instructions are further configured to implement performing post-processing on the database clone prior to said switching.

17. The computer-accessible medium as recited in claim 15, further comprising:

20 stopping the production database prior to said switching; and  
starting the production database after said switching.

18. The computer-accessible medium as recited in claim 15, wherein the production database is a data warehouse.

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19. The computer-accessible medium as recited in claim 15, wherein the generated database clone includes references to data in the production database.

20. The computer-accessible medium as recited in claim 15, wherein said loading data to the database clone is performed on a different host machine than a host machine hosting the production database.